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## **Dr. Cheryl LaRoche Receives 2011 John L. Cotter Award by Society for Historical Archaeology**

**Dr. LaRoche has been selected to receive the 2011 John L. Cotter Award in Historical Archaeology for outstanding scholarly achievement based on her remarkable work in expanding interdisciplinary developments of historical archaeology in examinations of African American history. She is a lecturer, public speaker, consultant, researcher, and professor who crosses several disciplines in her investigations of the African diaspora. LaRoche's work has had a profound effect through intellectual enhancement of research designs implemented within our profession and through her political and educational outreach to governmental and public audiences. She has excelled in expanding the knowledge of public and governmental audiences in the methods of archaeological and historical analysis of African American heritage. LaRoche has also worked ceaselessly to enhance the preservation and understanding of related archaeological sites.**



**LaRoche has been a powerful voice within archaeology to encourage researchers focusing on the African diaspora to be as knowledgeable of the intellectual heritage of African American scholars, such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Frederick Douglass, as they are of archaeological methods and theory. Among other works, her co-authored article with Michael Blakey, "Seizing Intellectual Power: The Dialogue at the New York African Burial Ground," *Historical Archaeology* 31(3): 84-106 (1997), has been widely cited across disciplines and discussed extensively by her peers within historical archaeology who seek to implement her recommended framework for research projects and civic engagement. Through such works, LaRoche has significantly enhanced the way historical archaeologists approach African American sites through interdisciplinary methods and through ethically-engaged collaborations with stakeholder communities.**

**By incorporating cultural landscape analysis in her most recent work, LaRoche has extended her interdisciplinary reach once again. For example, in "The 'Balance Principle': Slavery, Freedom, and the Formation of the Nation," in *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery*, edited by Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, pp. 233-62 (Yale University Press, 2010), she examines the intersections of legal history, the contours of slavery and racism, and the development of escape routes and strategies of resistance. Her analysis serves to enhance historical archaeologists'**

understanding of the larger geographic contexts of African American sites and trajectories of movement across the landscape. Similarly, LaRoche's pioneering dissertation from the University of Maryland in 2004 combined research in archaeology, free Black communities, and insights into the achievements of African Americans in aiding one another to attain freedom through the "Underground Railroad." Her work provides a framework for archaeologists grappling with this nebulous, clandestine history. LaRoche's research into slavery and the constitution, the fugitive slave law, and the resistance of enslaved women grew out of her dissertation, and we can look forward to future expansions of these interdisciplinary studies and insights from this exceptional scholar. She has also exposed young scholars to archaeological precepts in university classes, providing course instruction in the History department at Georgetown University and in the American Studies department at the University of Maryland, College Park.

LaRoche has provided invaluable consulting services for a number of archaeological projects focused on African diaspora histories. She has worked extensively with the public and with her colleagues inside and outside the profession as a steward for neglected, forgotten, or threatened archaeological resources. LaRoche served as an archaeological conservator for the African Burial Ground Project in New York City and has worked tirelessly to inform archaeologists about the importance of related issues in artifact conservation. Among her on-going efforts are educational outreach and consulting services for the National Park Service, Boston's African Meeting House, the University of Massachusetts, Boston, the City of Philadelphia, and the Duffield Street Project in New York City. She served on the "Preserve America Summit" panel and was an adviser and participant for the African American National Historic Landmark Assessment Survey. As one of the authors of the "National Significance of the Harriet Tubman Historic Area," LaRoche applied a cultural landscape assessment in that project for the National Park Service. In addition, she has provided guidance and direction for the public interpretation at the President's House site in Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia.

In 2006 and again in 2010, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley announced LaRoche's appointment to the African American Museum Corporation Board of Directors. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the Commission on African American History and Culture and is a newly appointed board member of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum. Most recently, LaRoche was instrumental in shaping Maryland legislation which provides capital funds to help preserve and protect African American heritage sites. She has also worked as a historical and

**archaeological consultant for the National Forest Service, Shawnee National Forest Service, and the Joseph Holston Underground Railroad Art Project.**

**Dr. LaRoche has made exceptional contributions to historical archaeology and its related disciplines and has embarked, as a recent doctoral recipient, in a career of scholarly excellence. She has significantly enhanced the quality of historical archaeologists' approaches to research projects and of governmental and public audiences' understanding of archaeologists' contributions to commemorating and preserving African American heritage. Akin Ogundiran, Professor and Chair of the Africana Studies Department, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, will present the John L. Cotter Award to Dr. LaRoche at the Society for Historical Archaeology's conference banquet in Austin, Texas, on January 7, 2011.**